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OMCT
OPERATING THE SOS-TORTURE NETWORK

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WORLD ORGANIZATION AGAINST TORTURE
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Case IDN/TMP 150999

The International Secretariat of OMCT requests your URGENT intervention in the following situation in **East Timor.**

Brief description of the situation

The International Secretariat of OMCT remains gravely concerned over the unceasing reports from East Timor on the human rights situation, on the life, security and integrity of refugees in West and East Timor, attacks on humanitarian workers and extra-judicial executions.

According to the East Timor Human Rights Centre (ETHRC), a member of the OMCT network, Rev. Francisco de Vasconcelos Ximenes, of the Gereja Kristetn di Timor Timur (GKTT or Christian Church in East Timor), has been shot dead on September 10th . The perpetrators were militia, who were accompanied by Indonesian police.

According to the information, Rev. Ximenes had been sheltering approximately 100 refugees in Hosana Church, Dili. When the martial law was imposed, a truckload of police came to the church and told them to go to the police station. Fearing for their safety, Rev. Ximenes, other church workers and the refugees decided to leave the church and traveled out of Dili instead. On September 10, Rev. Ximenes was shot on the road to Baucau. He died the following day. His final words were "please voice our voices."

OMCT shares the concerbs of the ETHRC and holds grave fears for the refugees who were with Rev. Ximenes, as not all were able to move to safer areas.

The ETHRC has further reported of the presence, on 12 September, of militia Supreme Commander, Joao Tavares and Deputy Commander Eurico Guterres in West Timor. According to the organisation, Tavares is operating in Atabai, Atambua and surrounding areas, and Guterres in Kupang and surrounding areas.

According to the ETHRC these two officials have been involved in the widespread violence in East Timor. Their presence coincides with increased violence against both refugees and aid organisations.

Reliable sources have confirmed that in Atambua on 6 September, an East Timorese refugee was tied up and then repeatedly stabbed until he died, in the front of a large number of refugees. The perpetrators were Indonesian military and militia. In Kupang, a further two refugee men were first shot dead in front of their families and friends and then taken to an unknown place.

On 10 September, Guterres threatened staff of an international aid organisation not to help refugees or give information about the refugees' situation to the outside world. This intimidation is particularly concerning given the violent attacks on foreign aid workers. Reliable sources have confirmed that four foreign aid workers sustained injuries after being stoned in the Nolebake refugee centre on 7 September. Two United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) staff were also attacked. The male staff member had his throat cut with a machete. The female staff member was stabbed in the left rib-cage.

On September 11, Australia's Minister for Defence, John Moore, estimated that 180,000 refugees had already arrived in West Timor. On September 12, another group of refugees arrived at Kupang airport from Lospalos, in the east of East Timor. On that date, approximately 16,000 refugees were in Kupang, in five different areas: Noelbaki village, Naibonak military complex, Kupang Sport Building (GOR), KONI Building and Golkar's building. Refugees are without adequate food, and are extremely thin and demoralized.

According to the ETHRC, there is a significant presence of Indonesian military, police and militia, and that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between these three forces. Indonesian military, police and militia are patrolling both Kupang and Atambua, and are carrying out operations, particularly at night, where they search for East Timorese men, including independence supporters. It is feared that East Timorese men and independence supporters are being rounded up to for execution. There are unconfirmed reports that on September 10 morning all refugees in Atambua were forced to form a line and report their activities to Indonesian military and militia.

An unconfirmed number of refugees were then taken to an unknown place using two trucks, where they were allegedly tortured and then killed.

Massacres, forced disappearances, assaults and threats and, in general, human rights violations are on such a massive scale that currently it is impossible to provide a comprehensive report of the situation.

Action requested

Please write to the Indonesian authorities urging them to :

i. take immediate measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the general population, refugees, internally displaced persons UN, international and local human rights and humanitarian aid agencies personnel;

ii. grant unconditional and unrestricted access to UN, international and local human rights monitors and humanitarian aid agencies to all areas of West and East Timor;

iii. immediately arrest and sanction militia leaders Joao Tavares and Eurico Guterres for human rights violations and all those responsible for human rights violations against East Timorese civilians in East and West Timor.

iv. ensure that people injured and tortured and the families of the persons killed and disappeared obtain adequate reparation;

v. guarantee the effective respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards.

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Geneva, 15 September 1999

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply